

## WESTERN NEWS

Libby MT 59923

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## Oops!

The Environmental Working Group's asbestos report released last week has been under fire for being inaccurate. It under estimated the number of asbestos-related disease deaths because of the way death certificates are filled out.

For instance, in Montana – which ranked 42nd among the 50 states – Cascade County was listed as having the most asbestos-related disease deaths in Big Sky. Lincoln County actually ranked a distant third behind Yellowstone County.

However, the Great Falls Tribune was quick to react and set the record straight by disputing the facts and saying the EWG's numbers were inaccurate. The bad news is the numbers were conservative and underestimated the actual number of deaths because of the inconsistency in reporting deaths from asbestos-related disease. Which makes the overall report more grim.

It doesn't matter if Cascade or Lincoln county has the highest total since the source of the asbestos seems to be the same – our own Zonolite Mountain mine.

Too bad the Tribune didn't jump on the facts when a report earlier this year circulated among all of the state's dailies that Libby's contaminated area had expanded. Not so said the EPA. Headlines statewide read "Libby's nightmare continues" and there was nary a peep from the fact-checkers except in Libby. –  
*Roger Morris*